



For Immediate Release  
Date: June 20, 2002



## **Tacoma businesses win WorkFirst and WorkSource Employer of the Year honors**

TACOMA, WA – Northwest Church Supply and Simpson Timber Company's Commencement Bay Operations won Employer of the Year awards for partnering with the state of Washington to provide career opportunities to Pierce County families.

WorkSource Pierce County and Washington WorkFirst each presented awards to the Tacoma businesses for their dedication in hiring workers. Company representatives were honored during a June 14 ceremony at Tacoma Community College.

"These employers deserve special recognition for their continued support of WorkSource and WorkFirst," said Willis Daniels, regional director for the Washington State Employment Security Department. "Every job makes a difference for a family's well-being and benefits Pierce County's economy."

This is the first time Employer of the Year awards have been given in Pierce County.

Simpson Timber Company won the honor for collaborating with WorkSource Pierce County. The company began partnering with WorkSource last year when it needed to recruit workers for its new lumber mill in Tacoma.

"Our operations manager, John Hynes, asked that we find a way to hire production workers more efficiently, since we were operating with one less person in Human Resources," said Russ Krey, senior human resources representative for Simpson Timber Company. "By partnering with WorkSource, we were able to streamline the flow of applicants through our offices. It was a win-win situation."

Staff at WorkSource Pierce County advertise positions and screen and test applicants before directing about 10 per month to the mill for interviews. Simpson Timber Company has also recruited workers during WorkSource job fairs, and helped sponsor a countywide job fair at the Tacoma Dome that attracted 3,000 job seekers.

"Simpson Timber Company has been just wonderful," said Charles Ulrich, employer outreach specialist for WorkSource Pierce County. "The company has wholeheartedly supported WorkSource and provided entry-level labor jobs with family wages and great benefits."

A second Employer of the Year award went to Northwestern Church Supply. Owner Tom Hay has partnered with WorkFirst for many years, helping parents make the sometimes difficult transition from welfare to work. His Tacoma business manufactures award ribbons and rosettes for trophy dealers nationwide.

“He’s been a dedicated employer, and has never given up on the WorkFirst program,” said Richard Cheatham, WorkFirst marketing representative for Pierce County.

Hay said some of the employees he’s found through WorkFirst have had obstacles to overcome. But overall, they’re as good as those he’s found elsewhere.

“We’ve had good workers who wanted more than just the paycheck, they wanted to do a good job,” he said.

### **Background:**

WorkSource centers are Washington’s one-stop career resource centers for job seekers and employers. Job hunters can use computers, phones, copiers and fax machines; get work referrals and resume help; attend career workshops and connect with employers at job fairs. They also can search job listings and post their resumes online.

Employers can take advantage of computerized job matching, labor market information, assistance with recruitment and layoffs, information about training opportunities for their employees and tax credits to save their business money. To learn more about WorkSource services, visit <http://go2worksource.com> on the Web.

WorkFirst is Washington’s welfare-to-work program that helps parents find jobs, support their families and become self-sufficient. WorkFirst benefits employers by providing tax credits, subsidized childcare, medical coverage and support services for their new hires. For more information about WorkFirst, visit [www.wa.gov/workfirst](http://www.wa.gov/workfirst).

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